

**Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

**1. Introduction**

Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice & Support Service Camden, (SENDIASS Camden), has two full time Officers and one volunteer supporter.

Our Service supports and informs parents, carers and young people and we have no statutory remit to investigate child abuse. However, because the welfare of the child is paramount and statistics indicate that children with special needs are both more vulnerable to abuse and more likely to be abused all staff and volunteers have a duty to pass on any information in relation to suspected abuse of a child, young person or a vulnerable adult.

We aim to contribute to a culture of open referral regarding the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

SENDIASS Camden shares the beliefs, organisational intentions and commitments to the safeguarding of children as set out in the Camden Local Authority Safeguarding Children Procedures.

**SENDIASS** **Camden state that the Service will:**

* Place protection of the child or young person in the highest regard.
* Not allow its relationship with parents and its commitment to supporting them to compromise the overwhelming priority of protecting children and young people’s safety and welfare.
* Not ignore or condone any potentially dangerous or risky patterns of behaviour within the family out of a concern for the needs and difficulties of the parents.
* Consider the interests of the child or young person distinctly from the interests of the parents if there is any cause for concern.
* Ensure that the agreed local area child and adult protection policies will be followed.
* Implement Camden Local Authority procedures for managing allegations against staff.

**Resources:**

[Safeguarding Standards and Guidance — 2017](http://www.cscb-new.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/safeguarding-standards-and-guidance.pdf)

Revised Thresholds Criteria for Children’s Services in Camden — September 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-disabled-children-practice-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

**2. SENDIASS Camden’s role in Child Protection**

All staff and volunteers have an obligation to pass on concerns in relation to child abuse to the appropriate agencies, remembering the following:

* The welfare of the child is paramount.
* All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately – this may require a referral to Children’s Social Care, the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, (MASH) and, in emergencies, the Police.
* All staff (paid/unpaid) working in the Service have responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
* All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by staff and volunteers, and responded to appropriately.
* A commitment to safe recruiting, selection and vetting including a DBS check.
* Arrangements for policy and procedure review.

**3. Confidentiality**

Any information given to staff or volunteers by parents/carers/children/YP is deemed confidential by the Service and, is only to be disclosed to other agencies with the agreement of the parent/carer/child/YP. However, in cases of suspected abuse, it is considered necessary to disclose this information without the permission of the parent/carer/child/YP, to the designated person or appropriate agency. Parents, carers, children and young people are informed of our practice regarding confidentiality at initial telephone and face-to-face contact.

SENDIASS Camden is committed to partnership with parents/carers/children/YP and as such supports the principles of openness and honesty with parents/carers/children/YP, however, the safety and welfare of the child will always be paramount.

SENDIASS Camden has its own impartiality and confidentiality policies included in the Service Roles and Responsibilities document that clearly states:

Very occasionally, we may observe something that may give cause for concern. Or, it may be in the discussions with the parents or young person, that something comes up that gives the SENDIASS Officer cause for concern that the child/young person’s well-being is at risk. If this is the case, the SENDIASS Officer has a duty to express that concern as soon as possible to the SENDIASS Manager so that appropriate steps can be taken.

**4. How to make a referral**

If a parent or child discloses information that leads you to suspect that a child/young person might be at risk, or you have noticed physical or behavioural indicators which cause you concern, you should take the following action:

* React calmly, take what is being said seriously and offer reassurance.
* **Do not ask questions.**
* Discuss your concern with a SENDIASS Officer, **020 7974 6264.**
* In all instances where it is suspected that a child or young person is suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or serious neglect this should be referred to :

**Camden Children & Families Contact Service**

The Children & Families Contact Service is a single access point providing advice, information and support for children and young people who may need extra help or who are vulnerable and at risk. The team provides access to the right help at the right time, as well as supporting professionals to work in an integrated way with children, young people and their families. This includes MASH and Early Help.

**Camden MASH** (part of the Children & Families Contact Service)

The MASH is a partnership of agencies that have a duty to safeguard children and who have agreed to share information they have on families and children, and work within an integrated team in order to improve decision-making whenever there are concerns about a child.

**If the child already has a CSSW social worker, please contact them directly as the MASH team only deal with calls on new cases.**



Please refer to Camden’s threshold document before making a referral to the Children & Families Contact Service.

**MASH team:**   
9th Floor  
5 St Pancras Square  
London  
N1C 4AG

**Tel:** 020 7974 3317 (9am to 5pm)

**Out of Hours Tel:** 020 7974 4444

**Email:** [LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk)

**Secure Email:** [LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk.cjsm.net](mailto:LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk.cjsm.net)

CSSW Teams can be contacted on the following numbers:

**Family Intervention Team 1 (Kilburn Team):** 020 7974 3524

**Family Intervention Team 2 (Kentish Town Team):** 020 7974 4093

**Family Intervention Team 3 (Euston Team):** 020 7974 2826

**UCLH/RFH Social Work Team:** 020 7974 2721

**Looked After Children Team:** 020 7974 7217 / 7218

**Leaving Care Team:** 020 7974 6169

**Brief Intervention Team:** 020 7974 2703

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm call the police on 999.**



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**5. Recording suspected or actual incidents of child abuse**

Important information includes:

* + The date and time of disclosure.
  + The suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.
  + Details given to you about the date, time and place of the incident.
  + Who disclosed the incident.
  + Who else was present at the time of the disclosure.
  + Any information you may think relevant e.g. observations during a home visit.
  + Details of reporting (who to, who by and when).
  + Conversations with other professionals.

All recording should be factual and be kept confidential and secure. It can only be shared on a need to know basis.

**Remember**, that any allegation may eventually lead to criminal proceedings **so do not ask** questions, just take notes from anyone who may disclose abuse to you and write down factual observations, not your opinions.

Records must be signed and dated. Specific child protection records will be kept separate and only persons directly involved in the case will have access to the records. Where information is requested by Children’s Social Care, the SENDIASS Officer, in discussion with Children’s Social Care, should ensure that information passed on is relevant. Where a volunteer/staff member cannot contact an Officer, they should seek further advice from a specialist in child protection. (See agencies listed above).

**6. Roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns**

**SENDIASS Officers:**

* Attend relevant training to ensure he/she can recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
* Attend relevant training to ensure support can be given to the member of staff or volunteer involved in the child abuse case.
* Collect all relevant information regarding the child protection concern.
* Consider appropriateness of speaking with or involving the parents/carers/YP.
* Be aware of the impact of the situation and offer support to the volunteer or member of staff or organise appropriate support.

**Volunteers**

* Attend relevant training to ensure they can recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse.
* Make themselves familiar with the organisation’s child protection policy and procedure.
* Report any concerns or allegations of child abuse to the SENDIASS Officer.
* If the Officer is not available, contact the Children & Families Contact Service.
* Write a factual report (see above).

1. **Management of safeguarding and other serious allegations made against members of staff.**

Staff member receives allegation or concern

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Reports it immediately to Head of Service of staff member to whom concern relates

↓***Safeguarding concern*** ↓ ***Other***

Ensures child/vulnerable adult is safe. Decides if medical attention needed ↓ ***serious***

↓ ↓ ***concern***

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| Contacts LADO or Adult Protection Co-ordinator to discuss Whether significant substance to warrant investigation |

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| LADO implements child protection procedures if concern relates to staff members personal life |

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| Contacts HR to discuss whether  significant substance to warrant formal investigation & potential impact on their employment |

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Informs Director

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| Disciplinary process |

(where appropriate)

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Advises Director of outcome of process

Any allegation that a member of staff may have harmed a child should be reported straight to the Service Manager, (or Line Manager if the allegation is against the Service Manager or the Service Manager is unavailable). The Service Manager must contact the local authority designated officer, (LADO), within 24 hours to report the concern.

All LADO referrals must be made directly to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub team (MASH) Tel: **020 7974 3317** Email: [LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk) or Secure email: [LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk.cjsm.net](mailto:LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk.cjsm.net)

By law, the LADO must be contacted whenever there is an allegation that a member of staff may have:-

* behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child,
* committed a criminal offence against a child,
* behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

The LADO and the responsible manager, (Service/Line), will discuss the case to decide what action needs to be taken including whether the staff member concerned should be informed of the allegation. At this point, it may become clear that the allegation is false or malicious. The staff member will then be informed and no further action taken.

**What action may be taken?**

If there are concerns that a child has suffered significant harm or a criminal offence has occurred, the LADO will ask for a strategy meeting to be held. The police, Family services, social work and the employer, (local authority), will all be involved at this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to share information and decide the next course of action. This may be:

* Family services and Social work carrying out an investigation under child protection procedures.
* Police action in relation to possible criminal offences.
* Disciplinary action carried out by the local authority.

Cases should be dealt with as quickly as possible but conducted in a thorough and fair manner. There are government guidelines as to how long investigations should take, but the length and time will be dependent on factors such as the seriousness and complexity of the allegations.

**8. Contribution of the Service to further investigations**

The service will co-operate fully with enquiries carried out by Children’s Social Care, by providing relevant information about a particular incident or about the family.

We are, however, not able to provide a professional opinion on what might be the best course of action for the child.

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### **Appendix 1 Child Protection Flow Chart**

### **Action to take if you are concerned a child/young person is at risk**

A

Physical or behavioural indication or sign.

B

Parent/carer might disclose information to you which may make you suspect that a child/young person is at risk.

C

A child/young person tells you they are being abused in some way

Accurate records must be kept at all times

Contact Service Manager, or in his/her absence the designated deputy

React calmly, take seriously what the child/young person is saying and reassure them. Do not question the child/young person. Pass on the information to the Service Manager or the designated person

Service Manager or designated deputy person makes the decision to refer to Social Services or the Police or to seek a consultation.

Social Services Department and Service Manager/designated person decide how to involve the parents/carers.

Record what you witnessed/aroused your suspicions and action taken. Include dates and times.

Where a volunteer or staff member cannot contact the Manager and finds the designated person unavailable, they should seek further advice from a specialist in child protection, (MASH/Duty Social Work Team).

**Appendix 2 Reporting form - Details of allegation**

**AGENCY Details**

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| Date of referral: |
| Referrers name: |
| Referrers job title: |
| Place of work & address: |
| Tel number: |
| Email: |

**Allegation Details**

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| Date of alleged incident: |
| Who has made the allegation eg child, parent, other professional etc: |
| Full details of allegation: |
| Where is it alleged the incident took place: |

**Details of person/s subject to the allegation** (repeat box if more than one person)

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| First name: |
| Surname: |
| Job title: |
| DOB: |
| Ethnicity: |
| Any disabilities: |
| Home address: |

**Details of potential victim/child** (repeat box if more than one child)

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| First name: |
| Surname: |
| DOB: |
| Ethnicity: |
| Any disabilities: |
| Gender: |
| Home address/tel: |
| Parent’s/carers names/contact details: |
| Is/has this child been looked after or on the child protection register: |